Mr. Speaker, I thank

my good friend from California for

yielding me time.

This morning as we sang the ‘‘Battle

Hymn of the Republic,’’ one line has indelibly

burned into my mind as I contemplate

this vote:

We have had unprecedented death

and grief in our country: firefighters

going into the World Trade Center,

never coming out, trying to fight for

their fellow citizens; soldiers and sailors,

dying at their desks of duty; heroes

bringing down a plane in Pennsylvania

so that we in this building might

be free and live. Unprecedented death

and sorrow.

Mr. Speaker, it is never easy to cast

a vote for war. We did not want this,

we did not instigate this, we did not

need this. We have no choice.

Paraphrasing Winston Churchill: let

us brace ourselves for our duties, and

with justice, with firmness, with patience

and fairness. Some day they

may say this was their finest hour.